

# ANTAR RASHTRIYA SAHAYOG PARISHAD BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Indian Council for International Co-operation

Vol. 30 No. 11

NOVEMBER, 2018

(16 Pages including Cover)

## A REVIEW OF THE GRIEVANCES

# THE TRANSVAAL AND OTHER COLONIES

- M K Gandhi

As in Natal, so in the other Colonies, anti-Indian prejudice had more or less begun to grow even before 1880. Except in the Cape Colony, the general opinion held was that, as labourers, the Indians were all right, but it had become an axiom with many Europeans that the immigration of free Indians was purely a disadvantage to South Africa. The Transvaal was a republic. For Indians to declare their British citizenship before its President was only to invite ridicule.

If Indians had any grievance, all they could do was to bring it to the notice of the British Agent at Pretoria. Still the wonder is that when the Transvaal came under the British flag, there was none from whom Indians could expect even such assistance as the Agent rendered when the Transvaal was independent.

When during Lord Morley's tenure of the office of the Secretary of State for India, a deputation on behalf of the Indians waited upon him, he declared in so many words that as the members of the deputation were aware, the Imperial Government could exercise but little control over self-governing dominions.

They could not dictate to them; they could plead, they could argue, they could press for the application of their principles. Indeed in some instances they could more effectively remonstrate with foreign powers, as they remonstrated with the Boer Republic, than with their own people in the Colonies. The relations of the



mother country with the Colonies were in the nature of a silken tie which would snap with the slightest tension. As force was out of the question, he assured the deputation that he would do all he could by negotiations. When war was declared on the Transvaal, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Selborne and other British Statesmen declared that the scandalous treatment accorded to the Indians by the South African Republic was one of the causes of the war.

Let us now see what sort of treatment this was. Indians first entered the Transvaal in 1881. The late Sheth Abubakar opened a shop in Pretoria and purchased land in one of its principle streets. Other traders followed in his Satyagraha in South Africa wake. Their great success excited the jealousy of European traders who commenced an anti-Indian campaign in the newspapers, and submitted petitions to the Volksraad or Parliament, praying that Indians should be expelled and their trade stopped. The Europeans in this newly opened up country had a boundless hunger for riches. They were almost strangers to the dictates

of morality. Here are some statements they made in their petitions: "These Indians have no sense of human decency. They suffer from loathsome diseases. They consider every woman as their prey. They believe that women have no souls." These four sentences contain four lies. It would be easy to multiply such specimens. As were the Europeans, so were their representatives.

Little did the Indian traders know what a sinister and unjust movement was being carried on against them. They did not read newspapers. The newspaper campaign and the petitions had the desired effect, and a bill was introduced into the Volksraad. The leading Indians were taken aback when they came to know how events had shaped themselves. They went to see President Kruger. He did not admit them into his house but made them stand in the courtyard. After hearing them for a while, he said,

## Think it Over

**Belief & Tradition**

**Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations.**

**But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.**

**Gautama Buddha**



“You are the descendants of Ishmael and therefore from your very birth bound to slave for the descendants of Esau. As the descendants of Esau we cannot admit you to rights placing you on an equality with ourselves. You must rest content with what rights we grant to you.” It cannot be said that this reply from the President was inspired by malice or anger. President Kruger had been taught from his childhood the stories of the Old Testament, and he believed them to be true. How can we blame a man who gives candid expression to his opinions such as they are?

Ignorance, however, is bound to do harm even when associated with candour, and the result was that in 1885, a very drastic law was rushed through the Volksraad, as if thousands

of Indians were on the point of flooding the Transvaal. The British Agent was obliged to move in the matter at the of Indians were on the point of flooding the Transvaal. The British Agent was instance of Indian leaders. The question was finally carried to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In terms of this Law 3 of 1885, every Indian settling in the Republic for the purpose of carrying on trade was required to register at a cost of twenty-five pounds subject to heavy penalties. Also no Indian could hold an inch of land or enjoy the rights of citizenship. All this was so manifestly unjust that the Transvaal Government could not defend it in argument. There was a treaty subsisting between the Boers and the British known as the London Convention, Article XIV of which secured the rights of British subjects. The British Government objected to the Law as being in contravention of that Article. The Boers urged in reply that the British Government had previously given their consent, whether express or implied to the law in question.

A dispute thus arose between the British and Boer Governments, and the matter was referred to arbitration. The arbitrator's award was unsatisfactory. He tried to please both parties. The Indians were therefore the losers. The only advantage they reaped—if advantage it can be called—was that they did not lose as much as they might have done otherwise. The Law was amended in 1886 in accordance with the arbitrator's award. The registration fee was reduced from twenty-five to three pounds. The clause, which completely debarred Indians from holding landed property, was removed. It was provided instead, that the Indians could own fixed property in such locations, wards and streets as were specially set apart for their residence by the Transvaal Government. This Government did not honestly carry out the terms of the amended clause and withheld from Indians the right to purchase freehold land even in the locations. In all towns inhabited by Indians, these locations were selected in dirty places situated far away from

the towns where there was no water supply, no lighting arrangement and no sanitary convenience to speak of.

Thus the Indians became the Panchamas of the Transvaal. It can be truly said that there is no difference between these locations and the untouchables' quarters in India. Just as the Hindus believe that touching Dhedhs or residence in their neighborhood would lead to pollution, so did the Europeans in the Transvaal believe for all practical purposes that physical contact with the Indians or living near them would defile them. Again the Transvaal Government interpreted Law 3 of 1885 to mean that the Indians could trade, too, exclusively in the locations. The arbitrator had decided that the interpretation of the law rested with the ordinary Tribunals of the Transvaal. The Indian traders were, therefore, in a very awkward condition. Still they managed to maintain their position fairly well by carrying on negotiations in one place, by having recourse to law courts in another, and by exerting what little influence they possessed in a third. Such was the miserable and precarious position of Indians in the Transvaal at the outbreak of the Boer War.

We shall now turn to examine the position in the Free State. Hardly a dozen Indians had opened shops there when the Europeans started a powerful agitation. The Volksraad passed a stringent law and expelled all Indian traders from the Free State, awarding them nominal compensation. That law provided that no Indian could, on any account hold fixed property or carry on mercantile or farming business or enjoy franchise rights in the Free State. With special permission an Indian could settle as a labourer or as a hotel waiter. But the authorities were not obliged to grant even this precious permission in every case. The result was that a respectable Indian could not live in the Free State even for a couple of days without great difficulty. At the time of the Boer War there were no Indians in the Free State except a few waiters.

*to be continued*



## A.R.S.P. BULLETIN

A NEWS & VIEWS MONTHLY  
Published Since 1987

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### PRINTER

**Avon Printers**

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New Delhi-110008

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www.arspindia.org

### PRICE

Rs. 5/- per copy

Rs. 500/- for Life

# AAPRAVASI DIVAS A REMEMBRANCE OF THE GIRMITIYAS



✍ Dr. Sarita Boodhoo

*(Dr. Mrs Sarita Boodhoo is the Chairperson of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. She is also a social activist, a writer and journalist and is well-versed in Indology and Indian Diasporic Studies.)*

2<sup>nd</sup> November is a symbolical date for the people of Mauritius. For it is on this date, in 1834 that the ship **Atlas** setting sail from the port of Calcutta brought the first **girmitiyas** – indentured labour immigrants to Mauritius. More than 70% of the people of Mauritius have an Indian origin.

When they landed in the harbour of Port Louis and walked up the sixteen steps of the Aapravasi Ghat – What is it that would have crossed their minds? They were the **jahaji bhais** (boat brothers). Every year around this period we are compelled to let our thoughts linger back over 184 years of our chequered history and pay tribute to our forefathers.

Although the advent of Indian immigration to Mauritius was a much earlier process with the periodical movement of Indian soldiers, seafarers, sepoy, political prisoners, artisans, engineers, traders, especially during the French period. It is the coming of the **Girmitiyas** (from **gimit** – bhojpurised form of agreement) the Indian Indentured who came on a contract of five years that has propelled a new mass movement not only to Mauritius but to the rest of the world where plantation economy demanded dire labour after the abolition of slavery. Thus a process that started on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1834 would only stop after 90 years definitely when the system was finally officially abolished in April 1917 and last year we celebrated the Centenary of the Abolition of the System.



Mauritius was the first post in this new system of labour and was described as a first experiment which became such a successful lucrative business that it was extended to South Africa, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana (Demerara), Trinidad and Tobago, the French islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion Island, Malaysia, Singapore and many other smaller plantation colonies (principally sugarcane) of the British, French and Dutch colonisers.

The travellers on board the “**coolie**” ships bound for a long journey, a journey of no return in most cases thrown together as they were developed long lasting bonding that cut across caste, class and creed. This bonding was called **jahaji bhais** – they were boat brothers and I may add **jahaji bahens**, boat sisters, who travelled the **sat samundar** together and suffered the vagaries of alien environment together. They shared their tribulations but also their hope for a better future for themselves and their children. Fate united them.

Every year we pay homage to those first **girmitiyas**, whether they came from the port of Calcutta (Kolkata), Vishakapatnam, Madras (Chennai), or Bombay (Mumbai). They resisted insolent might and subjugation, as did the slaves from Africa and Madagascar before them.

They were sturdy and faced untold difficulties, hardships, the squalor of poverty, humiliation, injustice and exploitation. But they had the capacity to bear and affront the colonisers and plantocrats of the oligarchy, with aplomb and tenacity.

Their souls, muscles and sinews joined in one great propelling force to challenge the cruel forces and make a better place for themselves and their children. They produced not only the wealth of the country, but contributed to betterment of World economy too. Enticed by **arkatias** (recruiters), they were lured and told that they would find, gold upon turning over the stones in Mauritius but there was no gold. It was sheer hard work and desolation that awaited them instead. Yet they turned Mauritius into a golden paradise which has no minerals and no resources but their own human resources to back upon. No wonder that every 2<sup>nd</sup> November, we gather with pride and gratitude at Aapravasi Ghat to pay homage to them in a morning solemn **Yaaj** followed by protocol functions of laying of wreath by dignitaries and official commemoration of the annual event of **girmitiya** arrival. It is the least small action that we can do to thank our forefathers and say “**We Remember**”.

## Point of Entry

It is important to remember and remind our younger generations that the **Aapravasi Ghat** as the Point of Entry of the Indian Plantation Workers is held as a significant symbology by their descendants. It is the



**Aapravasi Ghat** which has been gateway into Mauritius for those 457,000 Indians. A monument should be set up at Aapravasi Ghat to mark the historical arrival on Mauritian soil of almost half a million contract workers from India. They transformed not only the demography but also the arithmetic of ethnic politics in Mauritius reversing the calculations of the oligarchy for good. For after 1860, two thirds of the population of Mauritius would comprise of Indians. It is not one hundred or one thousand, but the bulk of *girmitiyas* who came from India.

It is worth noting that the Aapravasi Ghat houses the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre. It pays due tribute to late Beekrumsing Ramlallah, founder and Editor-in Chief of the Mauritius Times, a freedom fighter, MP and Junior Minister in the government of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and a pioneer of the Aapravasi Divas and Aapravasi Ghat. It is through his determination and move that Shrimati Indira Gandhi paid a symbolical visit to Aapravasi Ghat then known as **Coolie Ghat** in June

1970 upon her first visit to Mauritius. Which gave the Aapravasi Ghat an international dimension. It is through the efforts of Beekrumsing Ramlallah that Aapravasi Ghat became recognised as a national monument in 1987 and in June 2006 gained the status of World Heritage Site at UNESCO. It is a befitting homage to our brave ancestors from India.

When Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited the Pravasi Ghat 1978, he expressed his wonder and said he would make it the eighth jewel of India. In 2014 When Foreign Minister Shrimati Sushma Swaraj was Chief Guest of the Government for Mauritius in the 180<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the *girmitiya* arrival to Mauritius, she was moved beyond words. When Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi visited it in March 2015, he paid a glowing tribute to our forefathers at Aapravasi Ghat.

The *girmitiyas* came with their cultural heritage and songs, proverbs, languages, traditions, art forms among which the most well-preserved is the Bhojpuri Folk Songs of Mauritius

– the **Geet Gawai**. It is indeed a great tribute to them that the **Geet Gawai** has been listed as World Patrimony of Humanity at UNESCO on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 together with **Yoga** from India.

The *geet gawai* is a rich legacy preserved by the *girmitiyas* not only in Mauritius but in other diasporic countries which have Bhojpuri as a linguistic heritage and culture of origin such as in Fiji, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, in different forms. The listing of **Geet Gawai** at UNESCO is of great potential in cultural tourism. It is a great window dressing for our tourism, film industry and hospitality industry too.

Thanks to the well-preserved mosaic and fabric of the Bhojpuri linguistic and cultural heritage matrix, that the Aapravasi Ghat became a World Heritage Site of UNESCO. The Aapravasi Ghat too remains a great centre of tourist attraction being unique in the world as a Tangible Cultural Heritage. □

## NOMINATIONS INVITED FOR 10<sup>TH</sup> BHARATVANSHI GAURAV AWARD

Nominations are invited for the 10<sup>th</sup> **Bharatvanshi Gaurav Award from eminent personalities and organizations of Indian Diaspora by Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Nyas** (Trust for International Co-operation). The Award carries an amount of Rs.1, 00,000/-, along with a citation, a plaque and a shawl. The application along with detailed bio-data are to reach **the Nyas Office at 'Pravasi Bhawan', 50-Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi – 110002 latest by 15 December, 2018. Our e-mail addresses is arspindia@gmail.com ;**

arspind@bol.net.in .

The **Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Nyas** was created with the objective of maintaining close contacts with the Indian diaspora and to acknowledge and appreciate their achievements by publicly honoring at least one person every year to be selected for excellence for working for the Indian diaspora.

The First **Bharatvanshi Gaurav Samman** was presented to **Shri Ranjith Ramnarain** of the Republic of

South Africa on **25th October, 2005.**

The subsequent recipient of the awards are: **Shri Satnarayan Maharaj**, Trinidad & Tobago (2006), **Dr. Thomas Abraham**, USA (2008) , **Human Service Trust**, Mauritius (2009), **Shri Shivnath Rai Bajaj**, Thailand ( 2010 ) ,**Dr. Ved Prakash Nanda, USA(2011), Shri Muljibhai L. Pindolia**, Kenya (2013), **Professor Nihal Singh Agar**, Australia ( 2017) and **Dr. Sarita Boodhoo**, Mauritius (2017). □

## WHAT DOES INDIA MEAN TO DIASPORA YOUTH?



Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted 47th editions of Know India Programme (KIP) on 15th October, 2018 hosted 40 Indian diaspora youth at Pravasi Bhawan. The delegates were from Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Israel, Sri Lanka, Netherlands, France and Malaysia

The program was divided into two sessions. The first session was chaired by Amb. Anup Kumar Mudgal, Chairperson, Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) which is under the ARSP. The panel included Mr. Sanjay Bhala, Ms. Sashi Serien, Mr. Aniket Kale and Mr. Shobhit Mathur. Amit Gupta moderated the session.

In this session Amb. Mudgal introduced the ARSP and highlighted the diaspora section within the organisation. He mentioned that one of the core objectives of the DRRC is to engage with the Indian youth diaspora. Amb. Mudgal further discussed the primary reason to invite the KIP participants to ARSP was to get to know what India means to them. Mr. Sanjay Bhalla reinforced the idea of listening to the struggles and achievements of the Indian diaspora will help forge robust ties. While Dr. Rajni Sarin gave her blessings to all of the participants and suggested that consistency in interaction is key to cementing a strong relationship. The session also addressed the questions raised by the participants ranging from social, political, cultural and economic matters of India.

The second session was chaired by Mr. Raj Kumar Bhatia. The panelists included representation from the High Commissioner of Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Mr. Aman Narula represented the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Fijian high commissioner, H. E. Yogesh Punja, talked about the importance of Hindi language as a symbol of pride for the Fijian Indians. He encouraged the KIP delegates to study the history in its totality including the struggles and hardships that their ancestor experienced. Being proud of the Indian heritage, the High Commissioner states that he is a Fijian first and there is nothing wrong with that. The High Commissioner noted that coming to India was like a reality check. One has heard stories from their forefathers which in turn shapes an image in their head about India. But once they get here the reality is completely different.



Following the High Commissioner's remarks, Ms. Stacey Hinds, Head of Chancery, from the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago congratulated the organisers of the KIP program, the GoI, the ARSP, and the participants. She encouraged the participants to build up on this experience once they had returned home. She also talked about India being a complex and diverse country. Many tend to narrow it down to just Hindus, Islam, etc.. She also pointed out that in Trinidad and Tobago, during the Diwali season, no matter the religion, almost every house has lit diyas.

Mr. J. Goburdhun, the Mauritian High Commissioner started off by saying "Birth was in Africa, but my culture is from Northern India." He also explained how in Mauritius, one of the official languages is Bhojपुरi. This shows the inclusivity and the respect towards the Indian heritage in Mauritius. The High Commissioner also stated that during the Vajpayee government efforts were made to respect and recognise the People of Indian Origin but now during the Modi government he has made us Indian citizens. In his closing remarks the Mauritian High Commissioner stated, "When you study only then you can help the community."

The first secretary of the Guyanese high commission, Ms. Esther Gittins, congratulated the organizers of the KIP program, the Government of India, ARSP and the participants for being part of the KIP initiative. She also pointed out that Guyana is a nation of six different races and the Indian race being the most prevalent and hence the nickname "Little India".



In the end MEA spokesperson stated to the participants "Unless you come and feel India, you will never truly understand the heritage."

Mr. Raj Kumar Bhatia informed how ARSP helps connect the Indian diaspora with their Indian roots.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Mansi Khanna.

The event was followed by some light snacks and high tea. □

## SOUTH KOREA FIRST LADY CELEBRATES DIWALI IN AYODHYA, ATTENDS "DEEPOTSAV"

South Korean First Lady Kim Jung-sook celebrated Diwali in Ayodhya, where she was treated to a dazzling display of over three lakh earthen lamps on the ghats of the Sarayu river, besides a spectacular sound-and-light show.

Kim, who attended the "Deepotsav" function at the Ram ki Paidi, also performed a ceremonial "aarti"

along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the venue, before being treated to the display of over three lakh "diya" and the sound-and-light show on the water surface. Earlier in the day, after arriving in Ayodhya from Lucknow in a special chopper, Kim began her tour by offering tributes at the Queen Heo Memorial. Accompanied by Chief Minister Adityanath, she attended the ground-breaking ceremony for the upgrade and beautification of the memorial dedicated to the legendary princess of Ayodhya, who went to Korea and married a king there in 48 AD. From there, she went to attend the festivities at the Ram Katha Park, where she was greeted by artists donning the avatar of Lord Ram and Goddess Sita, who arrived at the Park in a ceremonial chopper as part of the "Ram Durbar". Kim garlanded "Sita" as they got off the helicopter and Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik and Adityanath welcomed "Lord Ram" and



*Kim Jung-sook attended the "Deepotsav" function at the Ram ki Paidi in Ayodhya*

"Laxman". In her address at the park, she recalled the historic ties between India and Korea and said she prayed for both the countries as they moved towards a future of peace and prosperity together. "Darkness cannot defeat light and if we all light lamps together, we can remove any darkness," she said in Korean. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed delight that Kim wore a saree at the event and tweeted pictures of her. In his tweet, PM wrote, "It is a matter of immense joy and pride that Mrs. Kim Jung-sook, First Lady of the Republic of Korea visited Ayodhya and also wore traditional Indian clothing. The people of India deeply appreciate this gesture." Kim, in her speech at the park, thanked PM Modi for inviting her to India. "Ayodhya and South Korea have an ancient link. This link forms the cornerstone of historical and civilisational bonds between India and the Republic of Korea," PM Modi

said in another tweet. Kim's standalone visit to India, which began on November 4, has rekindled the interest in the legendary princess who married a Korean king.

A large number of Koreans trace their ancestry to this legendary princess, who is known as queen Heo Hwang-ok. "The legend of queen Heo Hwang-ok binds the two countries

together culturally and her (Kim's) visit will further promote our people-to-people ties," a senior official at the cultural wing of the South Korean Embassy in India told PTI. An agreement regarding the Queen Suriratna Memorial Project was signed to facilitate the upgrade and expansion of the existing monument, commemorating princess Suriratna (queen Heo Hwang-ok). In July, the two countries had signed the agreement for the expansion of the Suriratna memorial project.

Uttam Das, a seer from Ayodhya, told PTI, "It was a matter of honour for Ayodhya that she (Kim) visited the place "A princess of Ayodhya had gone to Korea around 2,000 years ago and now, the first lady is visiting Ayodhya. Life has come full circle," he said. As part of the Deepotsav festivities, a Ramlila was performed by artistes from Russia, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia and Trinidad and Tobago. □

## 4 NRI CONGRESSMEN RE-ELECTED TO US CONGRESS

The four Indian-American Congressmen from the Democratic Party have been re-elected to the US House of Representatives and more than a dozen others won various other races across the country in the highly polarized 2018 mid-term elections held on 6<sup>th</sup> November.



*Dr. Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna and Pramila Jayapal*

Dr. Ami Bera, a three-term Congressman, was re-elected for a record fourth consecutive term from the 7th Congressional District of California. Unlike the previous three elections, Bera did not have to wait for weeks for recounting of votes. He defeated Andrew Grant of the Republican Party by a 5% margin.

In the Silicon Valley, Indian-American Ro Khanna defeated Ron Cohen of the Republican Party with a massive 44 percentage point in the 17th Congressional District of California.

"Tonight was a great night for our campaign and for Democrats across the country. I'm grateful to the voters of #CA17 for giving me the opportunity to continue to represent you in Congress. This has been the honor of my life," Khanna said. "With Democrats in control of the House, we will push for economic and foreign policy populism," he said.

In the 8th Congressional District of Illinois, Raja Krishnamoorthi was re-elected for the second term by a

comfortable margin of more than 30 percentage points. He defeated his Indian American Republican opponent JDDiganvker.

4 NRI Congressmen were re-elected to US Congress Congress woman Pramila Jayapal, the only Indian-American woman lawmaker in the House of Representatives, defeated her GOP rival Craig Keller by a massive 66 percentage points. "The American people voted to put the Democrats back in control of the US House of Representatives. Now, we are primed to restore the balance of power between the branches of government and push back even more strongly against the Trump administration's deeply destructive policies. Our communities are sick and tired of the corruption and injustice," Jayapal said in her victory speech in Seattle. □

## ACHARYA REWARDED FOR BACKING GOVT POLICIES



*Nilambar Acharya*

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli nominated Nepali Congress leader Shri Nilambar Acharya as Nepal's new ambassador to India.

Before aligning with the NC in 1991, Acharya was a communist leader associated with Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar-led Communist Party of Nepal (United). The ruling party was divided on naming an active diplomat or a senior diplomat as the new ambassador to India to maintain cordial relations with the southern

neighbour. "The PM briefed the Cabinet yesterday about the positive sides of Acharya's personality, saying he would do his best to promote Nepal-India ties," a PMO source told *THT*.

Acharya was appointed as a member of Eminent Persons Group from the NC quota when Oli was the prime minister in 2016. Acharya declined to comment on the move, saying the process has yet to be completed. The government has not formally announced Acharya's nomination. He will have to be confirmed by the Parliamentary Hearing Committee before being appointed by the

president.

According to NC leader Narayan Khadka, the ruling government could have chosen Acharya on three grounds — Acharya's past communist ties, his democratic credentials and his contribution as an EPG member. "Acharya's moderate personality, rather than his ideology, worked in his favour," Khadka told *THT*.

Acharya had served as Law Minister in the interim government formed under Krishna Prasad Bhattarai after the popular movement of 1990. He had served as Nepal's envoy to Sri Lanka from October 1996 and April 2000. □

## STATUE TO RECOGNISE SIKHS' CONTRIBUTION IN WWI

A 10-foot bronze statue of a turbaned Sikh soldier has been installed outside the largest gurdwara in Europe to recognise the contributions made by Sikhs in World War I.

The monument, Lions of the Great War, was unveiled on public land outside Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick near Birmingham, just days ahead of the centenary of the end of the war. It was funded by the gurdwara's congregation. Preet Gill,

the MP who represents Birmingham, Edgbaston, said, "When I was a councillor two and a half years ago, local sculptor Luke Perry suggested it and we got together with the community and the council to collaborate and make it happen."

Despite being small in number in British India, Sikhs played an important part in the war, making up more than a fifth of the British Indian Army, she said. "This statue will serve

as a reminder to Sikh soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the defence of democracy."

Thousands of British Sikhs, as well as local leaders and British soldiers, attended the ceremony. In all, 1.5 million Indians fought for Britain in World War I, more than 20% of whom were Sikhs. Many were farmers from Punjab and known as "Black Lions" in the war. □

## NEIL CHATTERJEE TO CHAIR FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which oversees the country's power grid and other energy issues



*Neil Chatterjee*

from natural gas to oil drilling, has a new chairman: Neil Chatterjee, 40. He was nominated last year to the board of FERC by President Donald Trump. Chatterjee is to replace Kevin McIntyre who resigned citing health reasons.

A former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Neil Chatterjee, led FERC for four months last year before McIntyre became chairman in December. He is the second Indian American to be tapped by Trump for a major regulatory position with a controversial mission. The other is Ajit Pai, current chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, who spearheaded the administration's drive to end net neutrality, a policy that prevents internet service providers from giving special treatment to preferred web companies. Two Republicans and two Democrats serve on the commission and its chairman is always from the party that holds the White House.

Chatterjee's new role puts him in the driver's seat in deciding multi-billion-dollar energy projects, which will still require approval by the Senate Energy Committee, chaired by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska).

FERC is also responsible for overseeing electricity markets and ensuring just and reasonable rates, approving applications for infrastructure projects, and playing a role in cyber security and the defenses of the country's energy facilities. Among the issues he will likely deal with are Trump's plans to allow the construction of the Keystone pipeline to carry crude oil from Canada to Texas, which was stopped by former President Barack Obama, and several gas pipeline projects. As energy policy advisor to McConnell, Chatterjee serves as his liaison to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Committee on Environment and Public Works and the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition. Over the years, according to his bio, he has played an integral role in the passage of major highway and farm policy and he has been a leader in the energy policy space shepherding efforts to combat cumbersome regulation and most recently working to lift the decades old ban on U.S. crude oil exports. □

Prior to serving with McConnell, Chatterjee worked as a Principal in Government Relations for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and as an aide to chairperson, Deborah Pryce, Republican Conference, Ohio. He began his career in Washington with the House Committee on Ways and Means. Chatterjee was recently named one of the 25 Most Influential People on Capitol Hill by Congressional Quarterly and has also been named a top energy staffer to watch by National Journal and Energy and Environment Daily. He is a graduate of St. Lawrence University and the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Chatterjee holds the influential position of energy policy advisor to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and helped shape energy legislation. His work backed the senator's campaign against regulations to restrict use of coal for electricity generation. A lawyer by training, Chatterjee started as an intern with the House Works and Means Committee. Between his stints on Congressional staff, he has been a lobbyist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Chatterjee, grew up in Lexington, Kentucky, where his parents worked in cancer research. He is married with two sons and a daughter. □

## KAMALA HARRIS, TULSI GABBARD AMONG DEMS IN US PREZ RACE

A week hasn't passed since the US midterms, and a scramble is already on for the 2020 presidential election with some two dozen aspirants for the Democratic ticket to run against Donald Trump. Among them are two candidates with strong "desi" ties: California senator Kamala Harris and Hawaii congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard.



*Kamala Harris and Tulsi Gabbard*

Both Harris and Gabbard have made early moves by reaching out to party workers and voters in Iowa whose caucuses kick off the 2020 presidential cycle on February 3, 2020. Although over a year away, presidential hopefuls begin

connecting with party leaders, donors, and activists months in advance.

Harris, 49, spent several days in Iowa during the midterm poll canvassing for Democratic candidates, and reminiscing about her own work there.

During the historic 2008 Obama campaign when she said that in addition to door-knocking, she became the Obama campaign's de facto pizza-delivery person because "no job was too small".

Tulsi Gabbard, 37, fresh from a fourth-term victory in the congressional elections, was introduced at an LA conference as the next president. Politico magazine reported last month Gabbard's adviser, Rania Batrice, "is reaching out to speechwriters and digital campaign staff with no explicit mention of a 2020 run, but with such a time frame implied". □



## Ayodhya DEEPOTSAV 2018 ENTERS GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS INDIA



*The Deepotsav is an initiative by the Tourism and Cultural Department of Uttar Pradesh to celebrate Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and return to His kingdom in Ayodhya.*

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's grand Diwali plans for Uttar Pradesh this year received global recognition after the Ayodhya Deepotsav 2018 made its way into the Guinness Book of World Record after 301,152 diyas, or earthen lamps, were lit on the banks of River Sarayu.

The diyas were lit at 'Ram Ki Paidi' on the banks of Saryu. Adityanath said that 'Ram Ki Paidi' will be developed on the lines of 'Har Ki Paidi' in Haridwar. A massive 30-foot statue of Lord Ram was also installed on the

banks of Saryu, along with that of Lord Hanuman, for Diwali celebrations in the city. South Korean First Lady Kim Jung-Sook, who was the chief guest at the same event, arrived in Ayodhya to attend Diwali festivities and began her tour by offering tribute at the Queen Heo Memorial. Kim visited the site, along with Adityanath, and attended a ground-breaking ceremony for upgrade and beautification of the memorial dedicated to the legendary princess of Ayodhya who went to Korea.

(Ayodhya and Korea share a deep historical connection through Ayodhya's Princess Suriratna, who married Korean King Suro in 48 CE.) The Deepotsav is an initiative by the Tourism and Cultural Department of Uttar Pradesh to celebrate Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and return to His kingdom in Ayodhya. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, Adityanath announced plans to rechristen the city of Faizabad to Ayodhya. The decision came close in heels of a similar move a few weeks ago after Allahabad was renamed as Prayagraj. Addressing a public gathering during Diwali celebrations in Ayodhya, Adityanath said, "We won't let anyone erase memories of Lord Ram from our hearts and that is what we, our government at the Centre is ensuring. We have come here to assure you that no one can do injustice to Ayodhya. The aspirations of the people from Ayodhya are the top priorities on our minds." □

## PRAVASI BHARTIYA DIVAS TO BE HELD AT VARANASI

The 15th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas will be held in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency Varanasi in January next year and the Indian diaspora attending the event will get an opportunity to participate in Kumbh Snan and attend the Republic Day parade.

The announcement was made on Saturday with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath jointly launching a dedicated website for the event to be held from January 21-23.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on January 9 every year as it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever. However, this year the event has been postponed so that it is held around the dates of the Kumbh Mela and the Republic Day parade. Talking to reporters here, Swaraj said the next edition of the event has been postponed by a few days after the Indian diaspora expressed interest in attending the Kumbh Mela in

Allahabad and Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. Smt. Swaraj said she will interact with four Indian missions to mark PBD on January 9, but the main event will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22. The government is touting the event as the first of its kind as the participants will witness the cultural heritage of Varanasi and of Allahabad during the Kumbh Mela. The theme of PBD 2019 is the "Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India".

Arrangements for the Kumbh Snan (holy bath) will be made at the sangam for the participants. Those interested in participating in the event can register on the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas website till November 15. "After the PBD convention, participants will be taken to Kumbh Mela by bus on January 24. Then, participants will travel from Prayagraj (Allahabad) to Delhi by train on the same day. The railways will run special Pravasi Bharti train for them," Swaraj said.

The external affairs minister also said Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind

Jugnauth will be chief guest for the January 22 main event while Norway leader Himanshu Gulati and New Zealand MP Charanjit Singh Bakshi will be special guests at the PBD event to be held on January 21.

The event is being organised by the Uttar Pradesh government and the Ministry of External Affairs. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said his government is making arrangements to showcase the "Athithi Devo Bhava" culture of the holy city of Varanasi. He said it was a good opportunity for the state to showcase its culture before the world. "We will also make arrangements for Indian diaspora to witness culture of various fields of the country at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas," he said. The chief minister also remembered former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, saying there were several things associated with him in Varanasi.

President Ram Nath Kovind will confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards on the last day of the event on January 23. □

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS OF A.R.S.P.

- |  |  |   |                                      |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <p>1. <b>Shri Umesh Kumar Mittal</b><br/>H.No.577, Maheshwari Ganj,<br/>Hapur (U.P.)</p>   | <p>Medical Store<br/>70885 06740<br/>92592 57651<br/><a href="mailto:umeshmittalbjp@gmail.com">umeshmittalbjp@gmail.com</a></p>  |    | <p><i>Umesh Kumar Mittal</i></p>     |
| <p>2. <b>Shri Tarun Vijay</b><br/>5, Meena Bagh, Maulana Azad Road,<br/>New Delhi-110 011</p>  | <p>Member of Parliament<br/>90131 81888<br/><a href="mailto:tarunvijay55555@gmail.com">tarunvijay55555@gmail.com</a></p>   |    | <p><i>Tarun Vijay</i></p>            |
| <p>3. <b>Shri Rakesh Gupta</b><br/>Pavilion Court-1, Sector-128<br/>Sector-128,<br/>Noida-201301</p>                                   | <p>Teaching<br/>95821 58906<br/><a href="mailto:rgupta@int.edu">rgupta@int.edu</a><br/><a href="mailto:guptark123@rediffmail.com">guptark123@rediffmail.com</a></p>  |    | <p><i>Rakesh Gupta</i></p>           |
| <p>4. <b>Shri Vijay Kumar Kaul</b><br/>C-705, Satisar Apartments,<br/>Plot No.6, Sector-7,<br/>Dwarka, New Delhi-110 075</p>           | <p>Professor<br/>98107 15407<br/><a href="mailto:kaulvijay@yahoo.com">kaulvijay@yahoo.com</a></p>  |    | <p><i>Vijay Kumar Kaul</i></p>       |
| <p>5. <b>Shri Upendra Kumar Upadhay</b><br/>B-603, Signature View Apartment,<br/>DDA Flats, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar,<br/>Delhi-110 009</p> | <p>Social worker &amp; IAS Training Institute,<br/>99716 51842<br/><a href="mailto:onlinespaceias@gmail.com">onlinespaceias@gmail.com</a></p>  |    | <p><i>Upendra Kumar Upadhay</i></p>  |
| <p>6. <b>Shri Rajesh Kumar Sachdeva</b><br/>B-404, IFS Apts., GH-24,<br/>Sector-56, Gurugram-122 011</p>                               | <p>Retd. Indian Foreign Service<br/>97170 72566<br/><a href="mailto:rksachdeva65@hotmail.com">rksachdeva65@hotmail.com</a></p>   |   | <p><i>Rajesh Kumar Sachdeva</i></p>  |
| <p>7. <b>Shri Virender Jit Grover</b><br/>373, Sunehari Bagh Apts.,<br/>Sector-13, Rohini,<br/>Delhi-110 085</p>                       | <p>Retired Bank Officer,<br/>98104 99788<br/>99999 93671<br/><a href="mailto:virenderjit@gmail.com">virenderjit@gmail.com</a></p>  |  | <p><i>Virender Jit Grover</i></p>    |
| <p>8. <b>Dr. Rakesh B.Dubey</b><br/>Flat No.5C, Deepa Apts.,<br/>10, I.P.Extn. Delhi-110 092</p>                                       | <p>Government Service, OSD Hindi,<br/>99688 95522<br/><a href="mailto:rakeshbubey@gmail.com">rakeshbubey@gmail.com</a></p>   |  | <p><i>Dr. Rakesh B.Dubey</i></p>     |
| <p>9. <b>Dr. Aditya Arya</b><br/>6/102, East End Apts.,<br/>Mayur Vihar, Ph-1 Ext.,<br/>New Delhi-110 096</p>                          | <p>Retd. Indian Police Service,<br/>98734 35853<br/><a href="mailto:dr.adityaarya@gmail.com">dr.adityaarya@gmail.com</a></p>   |  | <p><i>Dr. Aditya Arya</i></p>        |
| <p>10. <b>Shri Subhash Chander Gandhi</b><br/>Flat No.7B, Pocket 'F' MIG flats,<br/>Hari Nagar,<br/>New Delhi-110064</p>               | <p>Engineer, Retd. Vice President, EPI<br/>2085 2216<br/>99717 55889<br/><a href="mailto:Scgandhi_03@yahoo.co.in">Scgandhi_03@yahoo.co.in</a></p>  |  | <p><i>Subhash Chander Gandhi</i></p> |
| <p>11. <b>Shri Naresh Shandilya</b><br/>A-5, Manasa Ram Park,<br/>Sunday Bazar Road,<br/>Uttam Nagar,<br/>New Delhi-110059</p>         | <p>Retd. from Bank as Sr. Manager<br/>97117 14960<br/>98683 03565<br/><a href="mailto:nareshhindi@yahoo.com">nareshhindi@yahoo.com</a>;<br/><a href="mailto:nareshshandilya007@gmail.com">nareshshandilya007@gmail.com</a></p> |  | <p><i>Naresh Shandilya</i></p>       |
| <p>12. <b>Dr. Vinod Verma</b><br/>166, 4th floor, Ekta Apartments,<br/>Sector-8, Block-A,<br/>Dwarka, New Delhi-110075</p>             | <p>Service<br/>99900 00260<br/>99900 00404<br/><a href="mailto:vinodkprem@gmail.com">vinodkprem@gmail.com</a></p>  |  | <p><i>Dr. Vinod Verma</i></p>        |
| <p>13. <b>Shri P.R. Devi Prasad</b><br/>Flat No.710, Janki Apartments,<br/>Plot No.7, Dwarka, Sector-22,<br/>New Delhi-110077</p>      | <p>Retd. Civil Servant, MOIA<br/>9886408840<br/><a href="mailto:prd.prasad@outlook.com">prd.prasad@outlook.com</a></p>   |  | <p><i>P.R. Devi Prasad</i></p>       |

## The General Election of the Third Parliamentary National Assembly Election in

The General Election of the Third Parliamentary National Assembly Election in Bhutan was held on 18 October 2018, which saw a high voter turnout of 71.46 per cent. This is an increase of over five per cent from 66 per cent voter turnout in the 2013 General Election.

The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) officially declared Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT), which won 30 constituencies as the third elected government at the press conference on 19 October 2018. The Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT), which won

in 17 constituencies, was declared the opposition party.

A total of 313,473 (159,319 females and 154,154 males) voters turned out to cast their votes for the candidate of their choice in the 47 constituencies, taking the voter turnout to 71.46 percent. Of the total votes cast, 199,553 votes were cast in person on the EVMs in the 865 polling stations and 113,920 votes through postal ballots.

Of the total 47 candidates, seven are women. This is the highest number of

women candidates elected so far. In the past two elections, only four women candidates were elected each time to the National Assembly. In 2008, all four women candidates of DPT were elected. In 2013, three women candidates from People's Democratic Party and one from DPT were elected.

Of the 47 member elects, one has a PhD, 26 have Master degrees and the rest hold Bachelor degrees. In terms of age, one is in the 20s, 14 in 30s, 13 in 50s and two in their 60s. □

## DR. LOTAY TSHERING APPOINTED AS PRIME MINISTER

His Majesty the King issued a *Kasho* (Royal Decree) to the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) President, Dr Lotay Tshering, appointing him as the Prime Minister of Bhutan on 29 October 2018. The Prime Minister received *Dakyen* (ceremonial scarf) from His Majesty on 7 November 2018.



Brief profile of Bhutan's new Prime Minister:

Name	:	Dr. Lotay Tshering
Age	:	49 years
Constituency	:	South Thimphu, Thimphu
Qualification	:	MBBS, Dhaka University, Bangladesh General Surgery, BCPS, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Urology fellowship, Winsconsin Medical College Hospital, USA and Singapore General Hospital MBA, Canberra University, Australia
Professional	:	
Background	:	Consultant surgeon, JDWNRH and Mongar Hospital, 2001-2006 Consultant Urologist, JDWNRH, 2008-2013 Head of His Majesty's <i>Kidu</i> (Welfare) Medical Unit, 2014- 2018

# 56<sup>th</sup> IMTRAT Raising Day



Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck graced the 56<sup>th</sup> IMTRAT Raising Day in Haa on 21 October 2018. The theme for the festival this year was to project the bonds between Bhutan and India that has stood the test of times. The festival is popularly known as Haa Mela.

As in the past years, the Mela attracted thousands of

Bhutanese this year as well. According to a news release from IMTRAT, around 20,000 people, including senior dignitaries from armed forces and civil servants attended the event celebrations.

Celebrating the Indo-Bhutan friendship, the festival is a display of both Indian and Bhutanese cultures. It also includes daredevil stunts and sky diving being the most anticipated. Food and other stalls selling a wide variety of goods were among other attractions at the fair. The festival ended on 22 October 2018. □

## DAYS TO REMEMBER

in DECEMBER, 2018

- December 01 : Romania - National Day
- December 02 : LAOS - National Day
- December 02 : United Arab Emirates- National Day
- December 06 : Amavasya ●
- December 10 : Human Rights Day  
(All of us want freedom, equality and the right to live respectfully. We want equal rights in education and employment. No one wants injustice Human Rights Day is a celebration of our rights. It gives us the strength to safeguard our rights.)
- December 12 : Kenya - National Day
- December 16 : Bahrain - National Day
- December 16 : Kazakhstan - Independence Day
- December 18 : Qatar - National Day
- December 22 : Purnima ●
- December 23 : Japan's : B' Day of His Majesty the Emperor
- December 25 : Christmas □

## OBITUARY



**B R Wassan**

(1st September 1930-08th November 2018)

**Shri B R Wassan** a senior member & former Vice President of Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad away on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 at Gurugram. He was Vice President of Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad for two terms from 1996 - 1998 & 1998 - 2000. He left behind his sons and daughter & grand children and great grand children. May his noble soul rest in peace. □

## पर्यटन में हिन्दी को बढ़ावा दे संयुक्त राष्ट्र : भारत

संयुक्त राष्ट्र में हिन्दी भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के तहत, भारत ने विश्व निकाय से इसके मुख्यालयों में आगुंतकों के भ्रमण के दौरान हिन्दी भाषा के प्रयोग की अपनी मांग दोहराई है।

भारतीय दूतावास में मंत्री दीपक मिश्रा ने कहा कि न्यूयार्क आने वाले भारतीयों के बीच संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय का भ्रमण काफी लोकप्रिय है। मिश्रा ने विशेष राजनीतिक मामलों पर महासभा द्वारा आयोजित बैठक में कहा कि 'न्यूयार्क में भारतीय पर्यटकों के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र मुख्यालय का भ्रमण काफी लोकप्रिय है, हम पर्यटकों के लिए भारत की राजभाषा हिन्दी बोलने वाले गाइड मुहैया कराने का आग्रह

करते हैं।'

संयुक्त राष्ट्र अब छह आधिकारिक भाषाओं अरबी, चीनी, अंग्रेजी, फ्रेंच, रूसी, स्पेनिश में पर्यटकों के लिए गाइड की व्यवस्था करते हैं। इसके अलावा जर्मन, इटली, जापानी, कोरियन और पुर्तगाली भाषा में भी भ्रमण की व्यवस्था करते हैं। यह भ्रमण 45 मिनट से एक घंटे के बीच चलता है और व्यक्तों को इसके लिए 22 डॉलर और छात्रों व बुजुर्गों को इसके लिए 15 डॉलर चुकाना पड़ता है।

सुरक्षा परिषद, महासभा चैंबर और आगुंतक प्रदर्शनी के अलावा आगुंतकों को पर्यटक गाइड संयुक्त राष्ट्र के लिए महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे जैसे

निरस्त्रीकरण, शांति व सुरक्षा, मानवाधिकार और सतत विकास के बारे में भी बताते हैं। मिश्रा ने इसके साथ ही संयुक्त राष्ट्र से पीसकीपिंग फोर्स के रूप में सेना के क्षेत्र में योगदान देने वाले देशों की 'प्रमुख भाषाओं' में इसके पीसकीपिंग वेबसाइट को प्रकाशित करने का आग्रह किया।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने जुलाई में हिन्दी भाषा के लिए एक ट्वीट फीड लांच कर अपने सोशल मीडिया विस्तार में इस भाषा को शामिल किया था। पिछले माह, संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने न्यूयार्क स्थित अपने मुख्यालय के लिए हिन्दी लोक सूचना अधिकारी के पद का विज्ञापन भी जारी किया था। □

## भारतवंशी को मिला राष्ट्रपति मेडल



मीनल पटेल

भारतीय मूल की अमेरिकी महिला मीनल पटेल डेविस को अमेरिका के प्रतिष्ठित प्रेजिडेंशियल मेडल से सम्मानित किया गया है। अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री माइक पॉम्पियो ने उन्हें ह्यूस्टन में मानव तस्करी से लड़ने में उत्कृष्ट योगदान के लिए राष्ट्रपति मेडल से सम्मानित किया। मीनल ह्यूस्टन के मेयर की विशेष सलाहकार भी हैं। □

## गूगल होम हिन्दी में श्री

गूगल ने अपनी वॉयस असिस्टेंट डिवाइस गूगल होम को अब हिन्दी समझने के लिए भी तैयार कर लिया है। यानी ओके गूगल कहने के बाद आप इसे हिन्दी में कमांड दे सकते हैं, जिनका जवाब यह हिन्दी में देगा। गूगल होम एमेजॉन की एलेक्सा जैसी डिवाइस है। आपके पूछे गए सवालों का वह इंटरनेट से ढूँढकर जवाब देती है। साथ ही आप इसे म्यूजिक प्ले करने और इंटरनेट रेडी डिवाइस के लिए कमांड देने के लिए करते हैं। हिन्दी में गूगल असिस्टेंट मोबाइल फोन पर पहले ही आ चुका है। गूगल होम एप पर जाने के बाद आपको अकाउंट आइकन में जाकर सेटिंग्स में हिन्दी को पहली भाषा के तौर पर सेट करना होगा। □

## बांग्लादेश की पीएम ने मंदिर के लिए डेढ़ बीघा जमीन दी



ढाकेश्वरी मंदिर

बांग्लादेश की प्रधानमंत्री शेख हसीना ने दुर्गा पूजा के मौके पर ढाका के मंदिर को करीब डेढ़ बीघा जमीन गिफ्ट की है। हसीना का यह कदम इस्लामिक मुल्क बांग्लादेश में अल्पसंख्यकों के अधिकारों की हिमायती पार्टी की छवि को मजबूत करने की कोशिश माना जा रहा है।

शेख हसीना ने सोमवार को बांग्लादेश के सबसे बड़े मंदिर ढाकेश्वरी का दौरा किया। इसी दौरान उन्होंने मंदिर को करीब 50 करोड़ टाका (43 करोड़ रुपये) की कीमत की जमीन देने की घोषणा की। हसीना के इस कदम से 60 साल पुरानी मांग पूरी हुई है। इससे ढाका की पुरानी परंपरा को भी सामने लाने का मौका मिलेगा, कहा जाता है कि ढाका का नाम ढाकेश्वरी देवी के नाम पर है। बांग्लादेश में हिन्दू अल्पसंख्यक हैं। सत्ताधारी आवामी लीग की स्थापना के समय से ही हिन्दुओं का समर्थन इस पार्टी को है। बांग्लादेश में संसदीय चुनाव दिसम्बर में

होने हैं। सूत्रों का कहना है कि ढाकेश्वरी मंदिर को जमीन देने का मकसद चुनाव में इसका फायदा उठाना हो सकता है। यह मुख्य राजनीतिक मुद्दा भी है। पिछले कुछ समय से मंदिर की काफी जमीन पर कब्जा हो चुका है, लेकिन हाल ही में हसीना के निर्देश में, सरकार ने एक अग्रिमेंट की मध्यस्थता की और जमीन को मंदिर को सौंपने का फैसला लिया। बांग्लादेश सरकार ने हमारे सहयोगी अखबार 'इकोनॉमिक टाइम्स' से बातचीत में बताया, इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है कि आवामी लीग के कार्यकाल में बांग्लादेश ने लगातार आर्थिक विकास देखा है और स्थायित्व का अनुभव किया है। उन्होंने कहा, इस तरहकी और स्थायित्व का ही नतीजा है कि सुरक्षा व्यवस्था बेहतर हुई है, इसका असर यह हुआ कि न सिर्फ अल्पसंख्यक सुरक्षित महसूस करते हैं, बल्कि सभी बांग्लादेशी सुरक्षित महसूस करते हैं। □

## आजाद जिंदगी के मूड

लंदन हिस्ट्री म्यूजियम में बीते बुधवार को वाइल्ड लाइफ फोटोग्राफर ऑफ द इयर 2018 के लिए अवॉर्ड घोषित हो गए। खास बात यह है कि दस वर्ष से कम उम्र के फोटोग्राफर्स में इस साल जालंधर के अर्शादीप सिंह को भी यह अवॉर्ड मिला है। उन्हें यह अवॉर्ड पाइप में बैठक दो उल्लुओं की तस्वीर खींचने पर मिला। देखिए अवॉर्ड जीतने वाली कुछ अन्य दिलचस्प तस्वीरें :

**आराम का पुरस्कार :** इस अफ्रीकी गुलदार का नाम मथोजा है। बोत्सवाना के जंगलों में आराम करते हुए यह फोटोग्राफर स्काई मीकर को दिखाई, पर वहां अच्छी रोशनी नहीं थी। फिर हवा चली और पत्ते हिले तो रोशनी सीधे इसकी आंखों में पड़ी। उसी वक्त स्काई ने क्लिक किया ओर मथोजा ने ग्रांड टाइटल जीत लिया।

**सुस्ती का नाम :** चीन के इन किनलिंग बंदरों ने नीदरलैंड के फोटोग्राफर मार्सल वैन ऊस्टन

को कई दिन इंतजार कराया। वे नर और मादा बंदरों को एक साथ फ्रेम में लेना चाहते थे। आखिरकार एक दिन दोनों उन्हें किनलिंग के पहाड़ों में आराम फरमाते मिले और ऐसे मिले के उन्हें बेस्ट फोटोग्राफर का ग्रांड प्राइज दिला दिया।

**ततैया का घोंसला :** फोटोग्राफर जॉर्जिना स्टेलर ऑस्ट्रेलिया के वालेरमॉरिंग नेचर रिजर्व में पक्षियों की तस्वीर लेने गई थीं कि उन्हें ये ततैयां दिख गईं। ततैयां ने पास में ही कहीं अंडे दे रखे थे, जिनके लिए वे कीचड़ से घोंसला बनाने की जद्दोजहद में लगी थीं। इस तस्वीर ने प्राणियों के आचरण में पहला अवॉर्ड जीता।

**पानी में उड़ान :** फोटोग्राफर माइकल पैट्रिक ने एक रात फ्लोरिडा के पास बीच से काफी दूर अटलांटिक सागर में गहरी डुबकी लगाई तो उन्हें उड़ने वाली मछली दिखाई। यह मछली इन दिनों ना के बराबर ही दिखती है। पानी की



अर्शादीप सिंह

सतह के पास रहने वाली इस उड़ती मछली ने अंडरवॉटर फोटोग्राफी में फर्स्ट प्राइज जीता। □

## नेपाल तक ब्रॉडगेज ट्रेन



जनकपुर मंदिर

भारत और नेपाल के बीच ब्रॉडगेज रेल लाइन पर अगले महीने के अंत से पैसेंजर ट्रेनें दौड़ेंगी। रेल लाइन बिछाने का काम पहले ही पूरा हो चुका है। अनुमान है कि दिसम्बर के अंत में दोनों देशों के यात्री इस ट्रेन से सफर कर सकेंगे। हालांकि पहले भी यह रेल लाइन थी लेकिन उस वक्त यह नैरोगेज लाइन थी, जिसे पांच साल पहले बंद करके उसकी जगह ब्रॉडगेज लाइन बिछाने का फैसला किया गया था। इंडियन रेलवे के सूत्रों का कहना है कि बिहार के जयनगर से नेपाल के जनकपुर (कुर्था) तक जाने वाली लगभग 34 किलोमीटर की इस रेल लाइन का निर्माण कार्य कुछ वक्त पहले ही पूरा किया गया है। इस लाइन पर मालगाड़ी चलाकर ट्रायल भी किया जा चुका है।

जयनगर से जनकपुर तक ब्राडगेज रेल लाइन पर ट्रेन चलने से भारतीय तीर्थयात्रियों के जनकपुर की यात्रा काफी सुविधाजनक हो जाएगी। □

## आधुनिक भारत के निर्माता सरदार बल्लभ भाई पटेल

— नरेन्द्र मोदी  
प्रधानमंत्री, भारत

वर्ष 1947 के पहले छह महीने भारत के इतिहास में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण थे। साम्राज्यवादी शासन के साथ-साथ देश का विभाजन भी अपने अंतिम चरण में पहुंच गया था। हालांकि उस समय यह तस्वीर पूरी तरह साफ नहीं थी कि क्या देश का एक से अधिक बार विभाजन होगा। कीमतें आसमान पर पहुंच गई थीं। खाद्य पदार्थों की कमी आम बात हो गई थी। लेकिन इन बातों से परे सबसे बड़ी चिंता भारत की एकता को लेकर नजर आ रही थी, जो खतरे में थी।

इस पृष्ठभूमि में 'गृह विभाग' का बहुप्रतीक्षित गठन वर्ष 1947 के जून महीने में किया गया। इस विभाग का एक प्रमुख लक्ष्य था उन 550 से भी अधिक रियासतों से भारत के साथ उनके रिश्तों के बारे में बातचीत करना, जिनके आकार, आबादी, भूभाग अथवा आर्थिक स्थितियों में काफी

भिन्नता थी। उस समय महात्मा गांधी ने कहा था कि, 'रियासतों की समस्या इतनी ज्यादा निकट है कि सिर्फ 'आप' ही इसे सुलझा सकते हैं।' यहां पर 'आप' से आशय किसी और से नहीं, बल्कि सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल से हैं, जिनकी जयंती आज हम मना रहे हैं और जिन्हें भावभीनी श्रद्धांजलि दे रहे हैं।

### लगन और तन्मयता

अपनी विशिष्ट सरदार पटेल शैली में उन्होंने सटीक तौर पर सुदृढ़ता और प्रशासनिक दक्षता के साथ इस चुनौती को पूरा किया। समय कम था और जवाबदेही बहुत बड़ी थी। लेकिन इसे अंजाम देने वाली शख्सियत कोई साधारण व्यक्ति नहीं, बल्कि सरदार पटेल थे, जो इस



'स्टैच्यू ऑफ यूनिटी' का एक विहंगम दृश्य

बात के लिए दृढ़प्रतिज्ञ थे कि वह किसी भी सूरत में अपने राष्ट्र को झुकने नहीं देंगे। उन्होंने और उनकी टीम ने एक-एक करके सभी रियासतों से बातचीत की और इनको 'आजाद भारत' का अभिन्न हिस्सा बनाना सुनिश्चित किया। सरदार पटेल ने पूरी तन्मयता और लगन से दिन-रात एक करते हुए इस कार्य को पूरा किया और इसी शैली की बढौलत आधुनिक भारत का वर्तमान एकीकृत मानचित्र हम देख रहे हैं।

कहा जाता है कि वी. पी. मेनन ने स्वतंत्रता मिलने पर सरकारी सेवा से अवकाश लेने की इच्छा व्यक्त की। इस पर सरदार पटेल ने उनसे कहा कि यह समय आराम करने या सेवा निवृत्त होने का नहीं है। सरदार पटेल का ऐसा

दृढ़ संकल्प था। वी. पी. मेनन विदेश विभाग के सचिव बनाए गए। उन्होंने अपनी पुस्तक 'द स्टोरी ऑफ द इंटिग्रेशन ऑफ इंडियन स्टेट्स' में लिखा है कि किस तरह सरकार पटेल ने इसमें अग्रणी भूमिका निभाई और अपने नेतृत्व में किस प्रकार पूरी टीम को परिश्रम से काम करने के लिए प्रेरित किया। उन्होंने लिखा है कि सरदार पटेल के लिए भारत की जनता के हित सर्वोपरि थे, जिन पर कोई समझौता नहीं किया जा सकता। हमने 15 अगस्त, 1947 को नए भारत के उदय का उत्सव मनाया लेकिन राष्ट्र निर्माण का कार्य अधूरा था।

स्वतंत्र भारत के प्रथम गृह मंत्री के रूप में सरदार पटेल ने प्रशासनिक ढांचा बनाने का काम प्रारंभ किया जो आज भी जारी है—चाहे यह दैनिक शासन संचालन का मामला हो या लोगों विशेषकर, गरीब और वंचित लोगों के हितों की रक्षा

की। सरदार पटेल अनुभवी प्रशासक थे। प्रशासन में उनका अनुभव विशेषकर 1920 के दशक में अहमदाबाद नगरपालिका में उनकी सेवा का अनुभव, स्वतंत्र भारत के प्रशासनिक ढांचे को मजबूत बनाने में सहायक सिद्ध हुआ। उन्होंने अहमदाबाद में स्वच्छता कार्य को आगे बढ़ाने में सराहनीय कार्य किए। पूरे शहर में उन्होंने स्वच्छता और जल निकासी प्रणाली सुनिश्चित की और सड़क, बिजली तथा शिक्षा जैसी शहरी अवसंरचना के अन्य पहलुओं पर भी जोर दिया। आज यदि भारत जीवंत सहकारिता क्षेत्र के लिए जाना जाता है तो इसका श्रेय सरदार पटेल को है। ग्रामीण समुदायों, विशेषकर महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने का उनका विजय अमूल परियोजना में दिखता है।



यह सरदार पटेल ही थे, जिन्होंने सहकारी आवास सोसाइटी के विचार को लोकप्रिय बनाया और इस प्रकार अनेक लोगों के लिए सम्मान और आश्रय सुनिश्चित किया। सरदार पटेल निष्ठा और ईमानदारी के पर्याय रहे। भारत के किसानों की उनमें प्रगाढ़ आस्था थी। वह किसान पुत्र थे, जिन्होंने बारदोली सत्याग्रह के दौरान अगली कतार से नेतृत्व किया। श्रमिक वर्ग उनमें आशा की किरण देखता था, एक ऐसा नेता देखता था जो उनके लिए बोलेगा। व्यापारी और उद्योगपतियों ने उनके साथ इसलिए काम करना पसंद किया, क्योंकि वे समझते थे कि सरदार पटेल भारत के आर्थिक और औद्योगिक विकास के विजन वाले दिग्गज नेता हैं। उनके राजनैतिक मित्र भी उन पर भरोसा करते थे। आचार्य कृपलानी का कहना था कि जब कभी वह किसी दुविधा में होते थे और बापू का मार्गदर्शन नहीं मिल पाता था तो वह सरदार पटेल का रूख करते थे।

1947 में जब राजनैतिक समझौते के बारे में विचार-विमर्श अपने चरम पर था, तब सरोजिनी नायडू ने उन्हें 'संकल्प शक्ति वाले गतिशील व्यक्ति' की संज्ञा दी। उनके शब्दों और उनकी

कार्य प्रणाली पर सभी को पूरा विश्वास था। जाति, धर्म, आयु से ऊपर उठकर सभी लोग सरदार पटेल का सम्मान करते थे। इस वर्ष सरदार पटेल की जयंती और अधिक विशेष है। 130 करोड़ भारतीयों के आशीर्वाद से आज 'स्टैच्यू ऑफ यूनिटी' का उद्घाटन किया जा रहा है। नर्मदा के तट पर स्थित 'स्टैच्यू ऑफ यूनिटी' दुनिया की सबसे ऊंची प्रतिमाओं में से एक है। धरती पुत्र सरदार पटेल हमारी सिर गर्व से ऊंचा करने के साथ हमें दृढ़ता प्रदान करेंगे, हमारा मार्गदर्शन करेंगे और हमें प्रेरणा देते रहेंगे।

मैं उन सभी को बधई देना चाहता हूँ जिन्होंने सरदार पटेल की इस विशाल प्रतिमा को हकीकत में बदलने के लिए दिन-रात काम किया। मैं 31 अक्टूबर, 2013 के उस दिन को याद करता हूँ जब हमने इस महत्वाकांक्षी परियोजना की आधारशिला रखी थी। रिकॉर्ड समय में, इतनी बड़ी परियोजना तैयार हो गई, इससे प्रत्येक भारतीय को गौरवान्वित होना चाहिए। मैं आप सभी से आग्रह करता हूँ कि आने वाले समय में 'स्टैच्यू ऑफ यूनिटी' को देखे जाएं। यह दिलों की एकता और हमारी

मातृभूमि की भौगोलिक एकजुटता का प्रतीक है। यह याद दिलाती है कि आपस में बंटकर शायद हम चुनौतियों का मुकाबला न कर पाएं। एकजुट रहकर हम दुनिया का सामना कर सकते हैं और विकास तथा गौरव की नई ऊंचाइयों को छू सकते हैं।

### विकास का लाभ

सरदार पटेल ने उपनिवेशवाद के इतिहास को ढहाने के लिए अभूतपूर्व गति से काम किया और राष्ट्रवाद की भावना के साथ एकता के भूगोल की रचना की। उन्होंने भारत को छोटे क्षेत्रों अथवा राज्यों में विभाजित होने से बचाया और राष्ट्रीय ढांचे में सबसे कमजोर हिस्सों को जोड़ा। आज हम 130 करोड़ भारतीय नये भारत का निर्माण करने के लिए कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर काम कर रहे हैं जो मजबूत, समृद्ध और समग्र होगा। प्रत्येक फैसला यह सुनिश्चित करके किया जा रहा है कि विकास का लाभ भ्रष्टाचार अथवा पक्षपात के बिना समाज के सबसे कमजोर वर्ग तक पहुंचे, जैसा कि सरदार पटेल चाहते थे। □

## कैलिफॉर्निया में भारतीय मेयर निर्वाचित

अमेरिकी कारोबारी हैरी सिंह सिद्धू, कैलिफॉर्निया राज्य के बड़े शहरों में से एक अनाहिम के मेयर चुने गए हैं। सिद्धू, (2002 से 2012 के बीच 8 साल तक अनाहिम सिटी काउंसिल के सदस्य रहे हैं। उन्होंने 6 नवम्बर को हुए मध्यावधि चुनाव में एशलेघ एटकेन को हराया। वह शहर के पहले भारतीय मूल के मेयर होंगे। चुनाव में जीत के बाद सिद्धू ने कहा, मैं समाहित और रोमांचित महसूस कर



हैरी सिंह सिद्धू

रहा हूँ कि अपने शहर को एकजुट रखने और नेतृत्व करने का मुझे मौका मिल रहा है। भारत में जन्मे सिद्धू 1974 में अमेरिका गए और फिलाडेल्फिया में बस गए।

सिद्धू से पहले अमेरिका में रविंदर सिंह भल्ला और प्रीत दिदबाल ने भी मेयर पद का चुनाव जीतकर सुर्खियां बटोरी थीं। भल्ला होबोकन से तो प्रीत यूबा सिटी से मेयर रहे थे। पब्लिक पॉलिसी फॉर द नेशनल सिंख कैम्पेन के डायरेक्टर जस सज्जन ने कहा कि सिद्धू को इतने बड़े शहर का मेयर बनता देख बहुत उत्साहित हूँ। □

## अमेजॉन पॉली अब हिन्दी टेक्स्ट भी सुनाएगी

अमेजॉन वेब सर्विस (एडब्ल्यूएस) की क्लाउड सर्विस अमेजॉन पॉली में अब हिन्दी सपोर्ट भी होगा। कंपनी ने इसकी जानकारी दीं अमेजॉन पॉली एक मशीन लर्निंग सेवा है। यह टेक्स्ट को वॉइस में बदलकर उसके यूजर तक एकदम रियल आवाज में पहुंचाती है। कंपनी ने पिछले साल ही अंग्रेजी में भारतीय आवाज को अमेजॉन पॉली में जोड़ा था। लॉन्चिंग के मौके

पर अमेजॉन इंटरनेट सर्विस प्राइवेट लिमिटेड के हेड ऑफ बिजनेस डिवेलपमेंट नवदीप ने कहा कि टेक्स्ट इनपुट चाहे देवनागिरी में लिख गया हो, चाहे रोमन हिन्दी में, अमेजॉन पॉली के यूजर को वह रियल और साफ आवाज में सुनाई देगा। इंग्लिश और हिन्दी साथ भी लिखी गई हों, उसे भी अमेजॉन पॉली एकसाथ अपने यूजर तक सटीकता से पहुंचाएगा। कंपनी ने

कहा है कि दुनियाभर में हिन्दी बोलने वालों की संख्या 50 करोड़ से ज्यादा है। अमेजॉन पॉली में हिन्दी सपोर्ट होने से उसके भारतीय ग्राहकों का अनुभव बढ़ेगा। कई कंपनियां इन नई अंग्रेजी और हिन्दी आवाज का इस्तेमाल अपने बिजनेस में कर रही हैं। □